

NORTH CAROLINA'S ADOPT-A-TRAIL GRANT PROGRAM



GENERAL INFORMATION

North Carolina Division of Parks and Recreation

State Trails Program

October 2012

QUICK FACTS ABOUT NORTH CAROLINA'S ADOPT-A-TRAIL GRANT PROGRAM

APPLICATION DEADLINE

January 31, 2013

Source of Funds:

North Carolina General Fund

Acronym:

AAT

AAT Annual Appropriation:

\$108,000 for the State

Permissible Uses:

Electronic Trail/Greenway Publications/Website Construction
Trail Head Signs and/or Trail Directional Markers
New Trail/Greenway Construction
Trail/Greenway Renovation
Trail Tools and Equipment Purchase - <\$500 per tool
Trail Tools and Equipment Lease/Rental
Approved Trail/Greenway Facilities
Combination of the Above

Grants Available to:

Governmental Agencies
Non-Profit Organizations

Maximum Grant Amount:

\$10,000

Match Requirement:

No Match Required

Grants Awarded in 2011:

25 Applications Funded Totaling \$105,787

Number of Applications Received:

47 Applications Totaling \$221,091

Application Cycle:

2013 AAT Applications – Available November 1st, 2012
2013 AAT Applications – Due January 31, 2013

Contact:

Grants Manager – Vincent Newman-Brooks
Direct Line: (919) 707-9306
E-mail: Vincent.Newmanbrooks@ncdenr.gov

Contact List:

http://www.ncparks.gov/About/trails_contacts.php

STATE ENABLING LEGISLATION – ADOPT-A-TRAIL GRANT PROGRAM

The State Adopt-A-Trail Grant Program was authorized in 1987 by the North Carolina General Assembly as General Statute 113A-92.1 Adopt-A-Trail Program, with the following mandate: “The Department shall establish an Adopt-A-Trail Program to coordinate with the Trails Committee and local groups or persons on trail development and maintenance. Local involvement shall be encouraged, and interested groups are authorized to “adopt-a-trail” for such purposes as placing trail markers, trail building, trail blazing, litter control, resource protection, and any other activities related to the policies and purposes of this Article.”

PERMITTED USES OF AAT GRANT FUNDS

- New trail construction
- Repair/renovation of trails
- Website construction, electronic maps and trail information
- Trailhead or trailside facilities items included: horse tie-racks, bike racks, ORV loading ramps, canoe access points, and trail-head parking
- Trailhead Information and/or Trail Directional Marking
- Rental of trail construction and maintenance tools and equipment
- Acquisition of construction and maintenance equipment with unit value less than \$500 each
- Engineering studies and/or environmental studies, required by appropriate land managers

NON-PERMITTED USES OF AAT GRANT FUNDS

- Park Entrance Signs
- Park Facilities including: picnic shelters, picnic tables, fitness trail equipment, and birding equipment
- Condemnation of any kind of interest in property
- Feasibility Studies / Trail Planning
- Law Enforcement
- Roads
- Sidewalks

AAT GRANT PROGRAM REQUIRES NO MATCHING FUNDS OR IN-KIND SERVICES

The AAT grant program can provide up to 100% percent of all approved project costs. The AAT legislation does not require any matching funds or the donation of any in-kind services.

Note: *If an applicant chooses to list matching funds or the donations of any in-kind services in the grant application and if the application is approved for funding, then the listed matching funds and/or*

in-kind services will become a deliverable that must be accomplished and accounted for in order to successfully complete the grant contract. Please take note.

AAT PROJECT LANDS

North Carolina will award AAT grants to projects that are:

- On lands owned in fee simple or easements that are held in perpetuity by a governmental agency provided that the public is allowed use of the trail or facilities.
- On lands owned in fee simple or easements that are held in perpetuity by a non-profit organization provided that the public is allowed use of the trail or facilities.
- On private lands that are leased or have a legal agreement with a governmental agency or non-profit organization for a minimum of 10 years.

Note: *These are listed in priority order for evaluation and funding recommendations.*

Minimum Timeframe for Public Use

The Division of Parks and Recreation after consulting with the North Carolina Trails Committee have established the following minimum timeframe for public use:

Any trail project funded in part with AAT grant funds shall remain open to the public for a period of 10 years. Should a AAT trail project be closed prior to 10 years of public use, without sufficient reason, the State reserves the right to seek repayment of AAT funds based on a 10% per year depreciation schedule. And, the grantee's grant performance will be used when evaluating future grant applications submitted.

REIMBURSEMENT GRANT PROGRAM

The GRANTEE must finance 100% of the project costs. All eligible, incurred and documented expenditures will be refunded to the grantee, up to 90% of the total **AAT award amount**. The last 10% will be withheld until the project is complete, all records submitted, and a final site inspection has been completed. When all requirements have been met, the final 10% will be reimbursed.

Note: *You must have a fully executed State Grant Contract before spending any project funds. Funds spent prior to the execution of a State Grant Contract are not eligible for reimbursement.*

Note: *You must complete at least one project deliverable as noted in the State Grant Contract in order to request any reimbursement.*

ONE GRANT PER PROJECT

Only one grant will be awarded for a project and related facilities, should sufficient applications be submitted to enable total allocation of AAT funds. This will help insure statewide distribution of funding.

AAT APPLICATION REVIEW, SCORING AND APPROVAL PROCESS

Review of Application

Applicants are encouraged to submit applications early to allow time for the appropriate Regional Trails Specialist to review and insure that an applicant has provided all required documentation.

Prior to the application deadline, the Regional Trails Specialist will assist applicants, if needed, to modify or correct your application.

Anticipated Timeline *(timeline is subject to any changes due to changes in rules or regulations)*

AAT Application – Deadline, January 31, 2013

All electronic PDF applications must be submitted before 11:59 p.m. on January 31, 2013 - and a mailed CD/DVD/Flashdrive of application and ALL required documentation postmarked on or before January 31, 2013.

Applications and supporting documentation submitted previous to the deadline will be reviewed by State Trails Program staff and the North Carolina Trails Committee.

Applications received after the deadline will NOT be considered.

AAT Application Scoring – February 2013

A scoring breakdown can be found on our website http://www.ncparks.gov/About/trails_grants.php

The point values will be totaled and the applications ranked according to score from high to low. This AAT Scoring Criteria will be used to initially evaluate and rank all applications received. Other funding criteria include: regional distribution of grant awards; and consideration of funding of projects that serve all trail user types, are sustainable, ready to build and are supported by the surrounding communities.

North Carolina Trails Committee Review and Funding Recommendations – April 2013

It is a duty of the North Carolina Trails Committee to review all applications received and to make AAT grant funding recommendations to the Secretary of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the person authorized to award AAT grants.

The North Carolina Trails Committee will consider the following factors when making their AAT grant funding recommendations:

- The score awarded to each applicant
- Regional distribution of funds
- Projects that serve all trail user types
- Sustainability, readiness and community support

Compliance with Environmental and Historical Rules and Regulations – July 2013

Grantee applications recommended for funding will be evaluated by staff to determine if this project is in compliance with federal and state rules and regulations. Only projects found to be in compliance will be recommended for funding. This review process can take eight weeks or longer. Tentative clearance date is July 2013.

Notification of Grant Award – August 2013

Applications found in compliance with environmental and historical reviews will be forwarded to the Secretary of DENR for review and approval. Grantees whose projects are selected for funding can expect an award letter from the Secretary in August 2013.

Note: *This letter will be notification that your application has been approved for funding. A contract must be fully executed between the State and the Grantee before you are authorized to expend funds that you will want to be reimbursed as a part of this AAT Grant.*

Award of State Grant Contracts – October 2013

All applications approved for funding (pending compliance with State and Federal environmental and historical rules and regulations) will be sent to the Division of Purchase and Services who will execute the individual grant contracts for signature. Contracts must be fully executed by all parties prior to a grantee encumbering any funds they want reimbursed through the 2013 AAT. You will receive 4 paper copies of your State Grant Contract. These 4 copies are to be signed and returned to the Division of Purchase and Services for their signature. This process can take up to eight weeks to complete. Tentative date for issuance of contracts is October 2013.

Only after you have a fully executed copy of this grant contract can you begin work on your specific project for which you want reimbursement.

STATE GRANT CONTRACT START AND END DATES

The State Adopt-A-Trail Grant Contract defines the start and ending date for the project. (All contract dates listed on the above timeline are tentative; final contract dates are set when information and contracts are distributed by Division of Purchase and Services).

Note: *The state will not reimburse a grantee for any approved project costs incurred prior to the start date noted in the State Grant Contract.*

Note: *The end date for AAT State Grant Contracts will be May 1, 2014 to allow all reimbursement requests to be issued prior to the fiscal year end. The State no longer issues AAT grant contract*

deadline extensions. All grantee's must complete project deliverables by May 1, 2013 and conclude the reimbursement process by May 30, 2014.

CONSULTATION AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Your State Trails Program staff are ready to help you develop and/or review your 2013 AAT Application. A listing of staff can be found online at http://www.ncparks.gov/About/trails_contacts.php.

Please request our assistance.